

CLAIMS

1. An information management unit, which is arranged in an electronic network as a flow path controller for electronic data between electronic pens and destination units, the electronic data comprising handwriting data recorded by the electronic pens and one or more pen-resident parameters, said information management unit comprising:
 - 10 means for receiving at least part of the electronic data from an electronic pen;
 - means for storing at least one flow control object and an associated processing instruction, wherein said at least one flow control object corresponds to a value of at least one of the pen-resident parameters;
 - means for mapping the thus-received electronic data against said at least one flow control object to identify a relevant processing instruction; and
 - means for directing the electronic data flow to a destination unit based on the thus-identified processing instruction.
2. The information management unit of claim 1, further comprising an administration interface which is connected to said means for storing and allows for entry of said at least one flow control object and the associated processing instruction.
3. The information management unit of claim 2, wherein the administration interface provides for election of at least one control parameter from a set of available pen-resident parameters, for setting a value of each elected control parameter, and for generating the flow control object based thereon.
4. The information management unit of claim 3, wherein the administration interface provides for election of at least two control parameters from a set of available pen-resident parameters and available parameters of the handwriting data, whereupon the values

of the thus-elected control parameters are logically combined to form the flow control object.

5. The information management unit of any preceding claim, wherein said at least one flow control object

5 comprises a set of logically combined values of control parameters present in the electronic data.

6. The information management unit of any preceding claim, wherein the associated processing instruction defines an address of one of the destination units.

10 7. The information management unit of claim 6, wherein the means for directing returns the address to the electronic pen.

8. The information management unit of claim 6, wherein the means for directing forwards the received 15 electronic data to the address.

9. The information management unit of claim 6 or 8, wherein the associated processing instruction also identifies an electronic communications service for transporting the received electronic data to the address.

20 10. The information management unit of any preceding claim, wherein the associated processing instruction identifies a format of the electronic data flow to the destination unit.

11. The information management unit of claim 10, 25 wherein the format is based on a markup language, vector graphics, or raster graphics.

12. The information management unit of any preceding claim, wherein the associated processing instruction also identifies an image to be included in the electronic data 30 flow to the destination unit.

13. The information management unit of claim 12, wherein the image is identified as being a background image to the handwriting data.

14. The information management unit of any preceding 35 claim, which is arranged to recreate the handwriting data based on the electronic data, and to forward the thus-recreated handwriting data to the destination unit.

15. The information management unit of any preceding claim, wherein said flow control object also corresponds to a value of at least one parameter of the handwriting data recorded by the electronic pen.

5 16. The information management unit of claim 15, wherein said at least one parameter of the handwriting data comprises a command, or an identifier related to the substrate on which the handwriting data was recorded by the electronic pen.

10 17. The information management unit of claim 16, wherein the identifier is at least part of an absolute position which is decoded by the electronic pen from a position code on the base during the recording of the handwriting data.

15 18. The information management unit of any preceding claim, wherein each of the pen-resident parameters identifies a characteristic of the electronic pen in the electronic network or a characteristic of the user of the electronic pen.

20 19. The information management unit of any preceding claim, wherein the pen-resident parameters comprise at least one of an identifier of the electronic pen, an identifier of an operator of the electronic network, an identifier of a geographic location, an electronic mail address, a telephone number, a fax number, and an identifier of a language.

25 20. The information management unit of any preceding claim, wherein said value is defined as a range of values.

30 21. An information management system, comprising a plurality of electronic pens and the information management unit of any preceding claim.

35 22. An information management system, comprising a plurality of bases that each has a position code that codes at least one absolute position, a plurality of electronic pens which record their movement on any one of said bases as handwriting data by converting the position

code to said at least one absolute position, and the information management unit of claim 17.

23. A method of controlling a flow of electronic data between electronic pens and destination units in an electronic network, the electronic data comprising handwriting data recorded by the electronic pens and one or more pen-resident parameters, said method comprising:

receiving at least part of the electronic data from an electronic pen;

10 mapping the thus-received electronic data against at least one flow control object to identify a relevant processing instruction, wherein said at least one flow control object corresponds to a value of one of the pen-resident parameters; and

15 directing the electronic data flow to a destination unit based on the thus-identified processing instruction.

24. The method of claim 23, further comprising providing an administration interface which allows for entry of said at least one flow control object and the 20 associated processing instruction.

25. The method of claim 24, further comprising operating the administration interface to elect at least one control parameter from a set of available pen-resident parameters, enter a value of each elected control parameter, and generate the flow control object based thereon.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein the administration interface provides for election of at least two control parameters, whereupon the values of the 30 thus-elected control parameters are logically combined to form the flow control object.

27. The method of claim 23, wherein said at least one flow control object comprises a set of logically combined control parameter values.